

## PART VI

## Livestock, Dairying and Poultry

General Importance

Okanogan County is the second ranking county of Washington in cattle and horses and is fifth in the sales of live animals other than poultry. Over one-fifth of the farms specialize in livestock but livestock and poultry are secondary to field and tree crops in income. Cattle, calves, sheep, horses and hogs grossed \$3,408,641 for farmers during 1954. Cattle dominated the livestock industry with sales totaling \$2,506,391 in the 1954 crop year, fifth highest in Washington.

Livestock Trends

Livestock raising has changed and expanded considerably in the last 30 years. The total value of all livestock has increased about three-fold since 1925. In 1954 all livestock in the county were valued at \$9,600,880. Cattle and calves alone were valued at \$8,028,000. Major trends include a doubling of beef cattle numbers between 1939 and 1954. Although dairy cattle have been

Total Value of Okanogan County Livestock: \$9,600,880

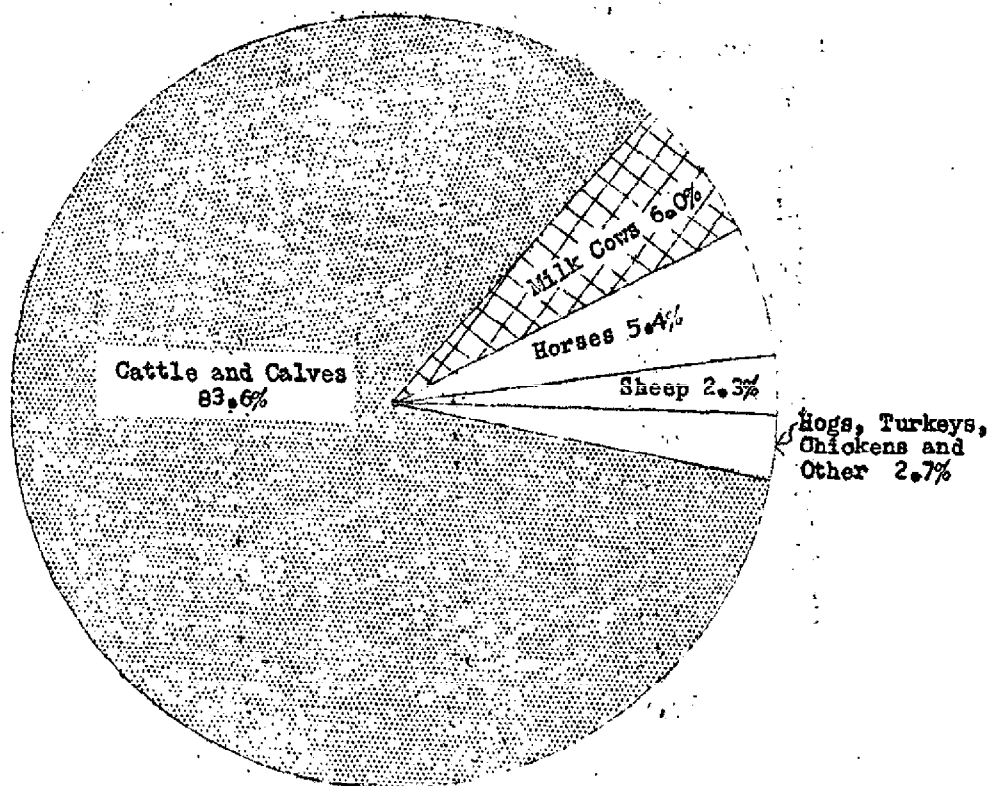


Figure 10.- Value of Livestock on Farms  
Okanogan County, 1954  
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

decreased, milk production has been expanded. Hogs and horses have steadily decreased in the last 20 years. The raising of chickens has declined, while turkey production has been gaining. Livestock that can utilize pasture and hay and for which there is a strong market have been generally increased.

#### Cattle: Beef and Dairy Farming

The cattle population reached a new high of 79,800 head in 1956. In 1954 cattle were kept on 1,280 farm places. Beef breeds outnumber dairy cattle by over ten to one and beef production is the major type of livestock enterprise. Cattle are most numerous in the upper Okanogan Valley in the Tonasket and Oroville districts. There are numerous large herds wintered in the valley.

Except for a slight dip in 1948 and 1950, numbers of beef cattle in the county have risen steadily since 1939. With a total of 73,500 head in 1956 there were over two times as many beef cattle being raised as in 1939. In 1954 Okanogan County producers sold 25,572 head of cattle and calves alive, second highest sales among Washington counties. They were sold from 870 farms and brought income of \$2,500,000 in that year.

Dairying is a secondary part of the cattle industry. The ratio of beef to dairy cattle in 1939 was only 3 to 1 but dairy cattle have declined since 1939.

Table 23.- Livestock Numbers on Farms  
Okanogan County, 1939-1956

Year	January 1 Numbers on Farms		
	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head) 1/	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	47,000	31,400	12,600
1940	49,000	36,700	12,300
1941	52,800	39,900	12,900
1942	55,300	42,300	13,000
1943	59,700	46,900	12,800
1944	61,500	49,000	12,500
1945	59,700	47,900	11,800
1946	60,200	48,500	11,700
1947	58,800	50,100	8,700
1948	56,000	47,900	8,100
1949	56,000	48,200	7,800
1950	53,000	45,300	7,700
1951	61,500	54,400	7,100
1952	66,200	60,200	6,100
1953	69,000	62,800	6,200
1954	70,100	63,900	6,200
1955	73,000	66,600	6,400
1956	79,800	73,500	6,300

1/ Beef cattle includes some calves for  
vealers and dairy type steers.

Source: U.S.D.A., AMS, Estimates Division  
State of Washington

Whole milk production, however, in this same period, has been increased and cream sales have been lowered. Cream production has dwindled to less than one-fourth of the 1939 total with only 172,000 pounds sold from farms in 1954. Okanogan County dairymen sold 7,850,000 pounds of whole milk in 1954 receiving \$307,000. Dairying is mainly in the upper Okanogan Valley and is primarily for filling local fluid milk and cream markets.

Table 24.- Dairy Products Sold From Farms  
Okanogan County, 1939-1954

Year	Whole Milk Sold From Farms		Cream Sold From Farms		Butter Sold From Farms	
	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)	(pounds)	(dollars)
1939	1,871,185	\$239,990	712,270	\$178,000	1/	1/
1944	3,276,540	383,340	460,325	230,000	---	---
1949	4,040,445	211,790	238,830	145,560	---	---
1954	7,850,445	307,320	171,940	87,510	---	---

1/ Butter sales off farms are too small for enumeration.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

### Hogs

In common with a general state-wide trend, the raising of hogs has been declining in recent years. Hogs increased slightly between 1939 and 1944, but after World War II dropped to a low of 4,033 head. The county ranked eleventh in the state in hog numbers in 1954. Over 260 farmers were feeding hogs in 1954 and they sold about 3,490 head grossing \$111,000 in that year. The number of farms selling hogs and the numbers of hogs sold declined sharply between 1949 and 1954. The income from sales of live hogs declined even more. In recent years commercial hog raising, particularly feeding, has not been profitable. The raising of pork for farm butchering and on-farm use has also become less common. Hog raising in Okanogan County is often on dairy farms. The Oroville area is the principal hog raising district, followed by farms surrounding Omak and Okanogan.

### Sheep

Okanogan County ranked fifth among the counties of the state in sheep numbers in 1954 but there were only about one-half as many sheep in the county as in 1939. Between 1949 and 1954 numbers increased by 75 percent with a total of 14,907 sheep in the county in 1954. A total of 96 operators sold 13,400 head of sheep alive for a gross of \$190,000 during 1954. This made sheep the fourth most important source of livestock income in that year in the county. The number of farms selling sheep doubled and the number of sheep sold more than doubled between 1949 and 1954. Sheepmen also sold 102,000 pounds of wool in 1954, the sixth highest volume in the state.

### Horses and Mules

Horses and mules for farm work, transportation and logging have declined in importance greatly in the last 30 years as tractors and other vehicles have

been put into use. The Census enumerated 9,504 horses and mules in the county in 1939 compared with 3,482 in 1954. The county ranked second in the state in numbers of horses and mules during 1954. With a large area of open range and use of horses in cattle ranching, packing and recreation, the horse is still important in the county. Most horses are of riding types with work horses limited to less than 150 farms. Sales of horses and mules in 1954 were made by 82 farms which sold 171 head for a gross return of \$11,000. The Colville Indian Reservation is noted for horses, containing 900 head kept on 150 farms. Horses also are quite common in the Okanogan and Methow Valleys, generally being kept on about 1,000 farms in numbers of 1 to 3 head per farm.

Table 25.- Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules  
Okanogan County, 1939-1954

Census Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	7,169	31,926	9,504
1944	8,288	19,003	9,316
1949	5,722	8,579	5,462
1954	4,033	14,907	3,482

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

### Poultry Farming

Poultry and poultry products are another fairly important source of income to Okanogan County farmers. Until recent years poultry was the third most important portion of the livestock industry in the county. Chickens reached a high of over 75,000 during the early 1940's. In 1954 the Census found 49,183 birds, the seventeenth highest total in the state. A total of 511 farms reported selling poultry and eggs in 1954, marketings worth \$145,000 per year compared with \$202,000 during 1949. The number of poultry farms also decreased one-third between 1949 and 1954. Sales of eggs and chickens have all decreased since 1949.

Table 26.- Chickens, Egg Production and Turkeys  
Okanogan County, 1939-1954

Year	Chickens (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	74,055	555,807	5,740
1944	75,354	607,929	2,052
1949	56,652	290,994 1/	1,988
1954	49,183	226,927 1/	6,496

1/ Eggs sold by farmers; does not include eggs consumed on farms.

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

The production and sale of eggs is the most important part of the poultry industry. In 1954, there were 427 producers of eggs for sale and total egg sales approximated 227,000 dozen per year returning \$98,000 to producers.

The sale of chickens for the fresh meat market was second and the total was about \$23,000.

The raising of turkeys has been increasing recently. Turkeys seem to be almost evenly divided in the county between light and heavy breeds. Numbers declined from 1939 to the post-war period, but in recent years reached a new peak with 6,496 birds reported in 1954. The county ranked fourteenth in turkey raising. The number of farms keeping turkeys went up from a hundred to over 160 between 1949 and 1954. Most turkey production is located in the central Okanogan Valley in the vicinities of Omak and Okanogan.

Small Animal Industry: Bees, Goats, Fur Animals

Bee-keeping is an important activity on a few farms in the Okanogan and Methow Valleys. Bee keeping and commercial production of honey is greater than in the 1920's and 1930's. As fruit growing has expanded so has bee-keeping increased because bees are as important for pollenizing apple orchards as they are for honey. According to the 1950 Census, Okanogan County was fifth in the state in numbers of bee hives. About 20 farms keep bees for commercial honey and for pollenizing service. Recent surveys have shown that the Tonasket area has over 1,475 commercial hives and Omak and Oroville districts have about 200 commercial hives each. Commercial honey production of the Okanogan Valley was estimated at over 324,000 pounds in 1956, valued at about \$65,000 to the bee keepers.

Goats were kept on only 43 farms in 1954. There were 268 head of goats enumerated and they were all of the dairy types. Goat raising was practically all on a non-commercial basis. Rabbit and fur farming is on a minor scale. There were 150 farms keeping rabbits for home use in 1950 according to the Census. Recent directories of fur animal breeders show that there are eight fur farms. There were six chinchilla farms in 1956, five in the Methow Valley near Twisp and Winthrop. There are two mink farms, one at Oroville and one at Wauconda.

Table 27.-- Okanogan County's Rank Compared With  
Other Washington Counties

Item Compared	Rank	Quantity	Year
<u>General</u>			
Land area.....	1	3,388,160 acres	1954
Number of farms.....	13	1,770 farms	1954
Land in farms--percent.....	14	51.9 percent	1954
Average size of farms.....	6	993 acres	1954
Cropland harvested.....	15	105,453 acres	1954
Rural farm population.....	10	9,358 persons	1950
Total county population.....	18	29,131 persons	1950
<u>Cash farm income</u>			
Value of all farm products sold..	13	13,601,972 dollars	1954
Value of livestock sold.....	14	3,408,641 dollars	1954
Value of crops sold.....	11	10,028,165 dollars	1954
<u>Livestock on farms</u>			
All cattle and calves.....	2	70,800 head	1954
Milk cows.....	19	3,235 head	1954
Hogs.....	11	4,033 head	1954
Chickens.....	17	49,183 birds	1954
Horses and mules.....	2	3,482 head	1954
Sheep and lambs.....	5	14,907 head	1954
<u>Dairy and poultry products sold</u>			
Value of dairy products sold.....	24	394,828 dollars	1954
Whole milk sold.....	23	7,853,000 pounds	1954
Value of poultry products.....	25	144,846 dollars	1954
Chickens sold.....	28	18,714 birds	1954
Eggs sold.....	25	266,927 dozen	1954
<u>Important crops harvested</u>			
Fruits.....	3	12,525 acres	1954
Alfalfa.....	6	26,100 acres	1954
Wheat.....	15	26,100 acres	1954
Oats.....	17	3,100 acres	1954

Sources: U. S. Census, Agriculture, 1954.  
U. S. Census, Population, 1950.